

# Missing or Misplaced Commas

## ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**compound sentence:** sentence that consists of two or more independent clauses

**appositive:** word or phrase that identifies or renames a noun or pronoun

**clause:** a group of words that has a subject and a verb

## HERE'S HOW

**Rule 1: Use a comma before conjunctions.** A comma should always precede the conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, *for*, *nor*, *so*, and *yet* that join independent clauses in a compound sentence.

### EXAMPLES

Greek myths are fascinating, **and** one of the most interesting tells of Daedalus. Daedalus was a sculptor, **but** his artistic gifts brought him ill fortune.

### EXAMPLES

**Adjectives:** The myth warns about being too clever, stubborn, and ambitious.

**Nouns:** In it, a father and son use wax, feathers, and a harness to make a wings.

**Verbs:** The two strap on wings, run along the beach, and fly toward the open sea.

**Rule 3: Use a comma between two or more adjectives of equal rank.** Notice when two adjectives modify the same noun. Then check whether the adjectives have equal weight, in which case, a comma pause is needed.

**EXAMPLE** Daedalus designed the wings with large, stiff feathers.

**Rule 4: Use commas to set off interrupters.** Use a comma after an introductory word or phrase or around any word or phrase that breaks the flow of thought. Also set off the name of any person directly addressed.

### EXAMPLES

**Introductory Phrase:** According to myth, Icarus's wings melted.

**Interrupter:** Daedalus, however, did fly to freedom.

**Direct Address:** Devon, explain why Daedalus warned about the sun.

**Rule 5: Use commas with appositives or clauses that add extra information.** Do not use commas when the appositive makes the meaning clear or when a clause is essential to a sentence.

### EXAMPLES

**Extra Appositive:** Olivia Coolidge, an English author, retold Greek myths.

**Essential Appositive:** The English author Olivia Coolidge retold Greek myths.

**Extra Clause:** Daedalus, who had helped King Minos, was held prisoner.

**Essential:** The mythical character who intrigued me most was Daedalus.